

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 8038

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MILI, KE, UG

SUBJECT: SPECULATIVE ASSESSMENT OF KENYAN-UGANDAN SITUATION

1. I HAVE BEEN AND REMAIN PESSIMISTIC REGARDING KENYAN-UGANDAN SITUATION. MY PESSIMISM IS NOT SHARED BY THE MAJORITY OF MY FOREIGN DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES IN NAIROBI, BUT THAT IS PERHAPS BECAUSE THEY DO NOT HAVE AVAILABLE TO THEM AS MUCH INFORMATION AND INTELLIGENCE AS I DO. THOSE WHO ARE BETTER INFORMED (UK, GERMAN IN PARTICULAR) SHARE MY PESSIMISM.

2. AMIN'S GREATEST ASSET IS HIS UNPREDICTABILITY. HIS FUTURE ACTIONS DEFY LOGICAL ANALYSIS OR ANY DEGREE OF ACCURATE PREDICTABILITY. WHAT IS PREDICTABLE, I PERSONALLY BELIEVE, IS AMIN'S NEED TO REGAIN SOME FACE FOR HIS POWERFUL EGO. ISRAELI USURPATION OF AMIN'S "MANAGEMENT" ROLE OF HIJACKING AND PARTICULARLY ISRAELI DESTRUCTIVE BLOW TO UGANDA AIR FORCE; PLUS MOUNTING DISINTEGRATION OF UGANDAN ECONOMY DURING HIS REIGN, ACCELERATED BY KENYAN STRINGENT PETROL CONTROLS SINCE ENTEBBE RAID; FADING MORALE OF UNPAID, UNDERFED, COWED TROOPS; TRIPS BY UGANDANS AND FOREIGNERS "TO THE MOON" (UGANDAN TERM FOR KILLING) -- ARE FACTORS IN AMIN'S LOSS OF FACE. BRITISH BREAK IN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS ADDS NEW SCAR TO INJURED FACE.

3. AMIN'S DREAM IS A CORRIDOR TO THE SEA, WITH UGANDAN POSSESSION OF SOUTHERN HALF OF KENYA, INVITING SOMALIA TO OCCUPY NORTHERN HALF. SOMALI PRESIDENT SIAD BARRE'S

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REBUFF OF AMIN'S SUGGESTION THAT SOMALIA INVADE KENYA

NOW (SOMALIA'S EYES ARE TURNED TOWARD DJIBOUTI; THE KENYAN SPOKE ON THE SOMALI STAR CAN WAIT UNTIL LATER) HAS THANKFULLY THWARTED ENCOURAGEMENT OF THIS INITIATIVE. AMIN MIGHT HAVE LAUNCHED A GROUND ATTACK ON KENYA ON JULY 7, BUT HE DID NOT; EACH DAY THAT GOES BY SUCH AN ATTACK IS LESS LIKELY. THE UGANDAN TROOPS' MORALE SLUMPS, THOUGH WE HAVE NO SUBSTANTIATION OF MUTINY AS SUGGESTED BY NAIROBI NEWSPAPERS.

4. DESPITE DISAPPOINTMENT OF SOMALIA'S UNWILLINGNESS TO JOIN HIM IN ATTACK ON KENYA, AMIN MAY, NEVERTHELESS, DECIDE TO UNDERTAKE SOME TYPE OF RETALIATORY ACTION AGAINST KENYA. ASIDE FROM DESIRE TO REGAIN FACE, HE WOULD BE MOTIVATED TO ACT IN THIS DIRECTION BY (1) HIS BELIEF THAT KENYAN GOVERNMENT NOW DETERMINED TO TOPPLE HIM, (2) HIS ASSESSMENT THAT KENYATTA GOVERNMENT IS UNPOPULAR AND COULD BE BROUGHT DOWN BY PSYCHOLOGICAL SHOCK OF SOME MILITARY OR OTHER ACTION PERPETRATED BY HIM, AND (3) HIS DEEPLY HELD CONVICTION THAT HE CONTINUES TO BE POPULAR WITH THE "WANANCHI" (COMMON PEOPLE) THROUGHOUT EAST AFRICA, A CONVICTION WHICH TENDS TO REINFORCE HIS BELIEF IN (2) ABOVE.

5. AMONG RETALIATORY ACTIONS AGAINST KENYA WHICH AMIN MIGHT TAKE ARE: AIR BOMBING OF KENYAN CITY OR INSTALLATION; INFILTRATION INTO KENYA OF SABOTAGE TEAMS; TAKING OF HOSTAGES (PERHAPS WITH ACTIVE SUPPORT OF PLO OR AFFILIATE) OUTSIDE UGANDA; DETENTION OF FOREIGNERS (UK, GERMAN, FRENCH, AMERICAN) AS HOSTAGES IN UGANDA. CUTTING JINJA POWER SUPPLY TO KENYA DID NOT HAVE EFFECT AMIN MAY HAVE HOPED FOR. AMIN'S CALL TO OAU (AND UN) FOR MEDIATION (KENYAN POSITION IS, IN SPITE OF FONMIN WAIYAKI'S GOOF, THAT THERE IS NOTHING TO MEDIATE) LOOKS UNPROMISING IN ITS PRESENT APPROACH. OAU SYG ETEKI RECEIVED COLD-SHOULDER RECEPTION BY KENYANS. AMIN MAY WAIT TO SEE WHETHER FACE-SAVING SOLUTION (AND LIFTING OF KENYAN BLOCKADE) IS FORTHCOMING. OR, HE MAY NOT.

6. KENYA, OF COURSE, HOPES THAT BY PUTTING ECONOMIC SQUEEZE ON UGANDA, CHANGE WILL COME FROM WITHIN WITH AMIN LOSING HIS NINTH LIFE, THE MILITARY COUNCIL TURNING
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AGAINST HIM; OR, AMIN WILL FEEL HIMSELF PRESSED INTO DESPERATE LAST-GASP ACT OF MILITARY AGGRESSION AGAINST KENYA, TO WHICH KENYA WOULD REACT. THE KENYAN ASSUMPTION IS THAT AMIN WOULD WIND UP ON THE LOSING SIDE OF SUCH A CONFLICT.

7. LOOKING AHEAD, TO WHAT MUST BE AN ULTIMATE CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT IN UGANDA0. THE QUESTION IS WHAT WILL IT

LOOK LIKE. KENYANS WOULD BE HOPEFUL THAT A MIRROR OF AMING WOULD NOT REPLACE FIELD MARSHALL DADA; FOR THEN, NOTHING WOULD HAVE CHANGED. BEST SOLUTION WOULD BE, IN KENYAN AND SOME NEIGHBORS' VIEW, FOR CIVILIAN OR COMBINATION MILITARY-CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT TO ASK PEACE-KEEPING FORCE COMPRISED OF ALL NEIGHBORS TO HOUSEKEEP UGANDA UNTIL DEGREE OF NORMALITY COULD BE RESTORED.

8. MEANWHILE, IN KENYA, IT IS OUR IMPRESSION THAT, WHILE KENYA AIR FORCE REMAINS ON FULL ALERT, GOK ATTITUDE IS ONE OF WISHFUL THINKING. IF THE WORST COMES TO PASS, KENYA MIGHT FIND ITSELF THE VICTIM OF AMIN'S DRIVE TO RESTORE HIS AUTHORITY, RATHER THAN THE BENEFICIARY OF A COUP DEPOSING AN UNWANTED NEIGHBOR. AND EVEN IF AMIN IS DEPOSED, THERE IS NO ASSURANCE THAT KENYA'S HOPES FOR A MORE PLIABLE GOVERNMENT WILL PAN OUT.
MARSHALL

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